443 651 Ready-made clothing, beads. No tax collected.

[82] Soumbala (kalgo in Mossi) [locust beans pressed into balls]. Payment in kind (one ball per seller).

Other spices. No fee paid.

Karite [shea] butter. Collected with a soutga (a kind of ladle), karite butter was used almost exclusively for the horses of the Mogho Naba.

Fritters and other cooked foods. Actually no fee was called for on these products, but the collectors demanded the payment of a tax in kind to provide their own food or that of the samand'kamba (servitors of the outer courtyard).

Salt. 300 cowries for each load (ox or donkey).

Hoes, axes. Each merchant provided a daba or an axe for work in the field of the naba. Nothing was collected at the subsequent market if all of the tools had not been sold in one day.

[306] Jewelry. No tax was collected. The jewelers who made bracelets and other jewels for the wives of the naba, as well as various harness parts, were exempt from all taxes.

Other markets. Fees collected for the benefit of the canton chiefs were about the same as [83] those paid at the market of Ouagadougou. In small markets, however, payments were made in kind. The edible products made up the food of the collectors, Gourounsi captives for the most part, who were prevented by their social status from having wives and so had no one to prepare food for them.

Chapter 5

Slavery Among the Mossi

● 567 We shall endeavor in the following lines to describe slavery as it existed among the Mossi before the French occupation.

567 173 We know that slavery has existed for a very long time in the land of the Mogho Naba, but, because of the total lack of dates in Mossi history -- handed down from generation to generation by the griot [heralds, drummers] of the naba -- it is difficult to determine when it was first introduced.

567 It is known, however, that the first slaves of the Mossi were all of Boussanga [Busansi] origin. The canton of Garango in what is

567 now the circle of Tenkodogo constituted a reservoir (figuratively called lambagré, "cotton reserve") from which the warriors and vassals of the emperor brought back hundreds of young slaves. This was because Garango recognized no authority; it was dependent neither on the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou nor on the king of Tenkodogo. Tradition has it that the warriors of the Mossi chiefs were always surprising the people of Garango on market days. The memory of these raids is why, even today the markets at Garango [366] are open only from six in the morning until noon.

The Mossi considered themselves to be free men, and no one, [444] not even naba, had the [85] right to reduce a Moaga subject to slavery. The facial tattoos made it easy to distinguish the Moaga [304] from foreigners.

Since there were few contacts between neighboring villages, 567 it was difficult even for highwaymen to sell young people from near- 674 by areas. This does not mean that there were not, all the same, captives of Mossi origin. Bandits rode, for instance, from Ouagadougou to Boussouma. They always carried large leather [492] sacks tied to their saddles and into them thrust children and women who were taken by surprise while gathering fruit in the bush. Such captives were always sold far from their home villages. Naturally such practices were severely dealt with by the naba. Naba Wobgo drove the canton chief of Bilgotenga, Warongo, from his territory because he enslaved Mossi people. Warongo was forced to take refuge in Yatenga and returned home only after the coming of the French.

567 Some of the slaves brought back from Garango were kept by the emperor, and the rest were distributed among the warriors. Up to that time no one thought of using them for anything but field work and domestic labor.

It was Naba Baongo, the twenty-sixth successor of Oubri, who first thought of selling the slaves. He said: "Id kossi bazas kamba tib boude nan wa saï" (literally, "let us sell these slave dogs; perhaps, one day, [86] there will be no more of them"). It is as if the emperor had foreseen the suppression of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves.

Today one seldom encounters former Boussanga slaves. They have no doubt returned to their villages since the arrival of the [304] French. Their descendants (house slaves, dogyiri) now wear the same facial tattoos as the Mossi.

567 The only slaves who have remained faithful to their masters or, more exactly, who have preferred to remain in Mossi territory after their emancipation, are nearly all Gourounsi.

The Gourounsi Captives

567 727 648 Sonrhaï [Songhai] forces led by Alpha Haïnon, Gazeré, and Babato used to raid Gourounsi country. They reduced a large number of Gourounsi to slavery, immediately making soldiers of the more enterprising among them to fight against their own people and selling or exchanging the rest for horses. Mossi country has always had a large supply of horses, so the Mossi used to go to Léo [439] to trade their horses for slaves or simply to trade their slaves to the Sonrhaï for cowries.

567 648 The Sonrhaï chiefs maintained good relations with the emperor of the Mossi, Naba Sanum. That is why they spared the Gourounsi village chiefs who had taken refuge with the Mogho Naba.

Boukary-koutou, the future Naba Wobgo, enjoyed the [87] regard and friendship of the Sonrhaï since he aided them in their wars against the Gourounsi in exchange for an ample share of the booty and slaves. We have shown that the large number of Gourounsi whom he brought with him to Ouagadougou contributed mightily to his being named emperor of the Mossi.

567 651 During the reigns of Naba Koutou, Sanum, and Wobgo, there were special slave markets attached to the regular markets at Ouagadougou and other large centers. A fee of 1,000 cowries was collected for the benefit of the naba for each captive sold, regardless of sex.

567 302 787 When owners desired to sell a slave, they first shaved his head, and it was only after the hair had begun to grow again that he was taken to market. The cutting of the hair derives from a superstition among the Mossi.

Depending on where the hair starts to grow, whether well back on the head, at the forehead, or near the ears, the interpretation varies as to how the slave is to be regarded: as a dangerous being; as a lucky or unlucky influence on the family owning him.

We shall not now go into details since such beliefs will be discussed in a special section.

567 The several categories of captives are as follows.

1. The Yemdaogo, all of whom are of foreign origin (Boussanga and Gourounsi) and either bought or captured during a war.

2. The daporé or dapobi (house slaves) who are the decendants of slaves. [88]

3. The bengaré, former slaves of the Peulh, who have abandoned their masters and put themselves under the sole authority of the Mogho Naba.

4. The Kamboiensé.

The Various Types of Slaves

567 Daporé ("living behind the house"). (a) The daporé belonging to the Mogho Naba. At Ouagadougou there is a section called
563 Dapoya, and its inhabitants are called Dapobi. They are wrongly considered (even by themselves) to be captives. Of Kibissi origin (we have noted that the Kibissi, the Ninissi, and the Gourounsi were the original inhabitants of the present Mossi area), they came of their own volition to Obri-Bangrenaba (Naba Oubri's chief of the bangré slaves), and he presented them to the emperor. It has been impossible to find out who was reigning when they arrived. The Mogho Naba first installed them at Wavoussé and later behind his house where they acted as guards and also were entrusted with important responsibilities.

These are voluntary captives. They are therefore not yemsé in the usual sense of the word, since they were neither bought nor sold, and the emperor did not mistreat them, although he did not grant them, as foreigners, the same rights as those possessed by his
[583] subjects. The dapobi could not marry Mossi girls. They were obliged to marry slaves, and that is perhaps why they are considered slaves themselves. The children of these marriages, called [89] dogyiri ("born in the house") make up the "house slave" class.

567 (b) Daporé of the Kamsaoughin and daporé of the canton chiefs. In addition to the foreign dapobi just mentioned, there are true dapobi who were either captured in battle or bought. The former are slaves of the Mogho Naba and are entrusted to the care of the Kamsaougho Naba, chief eunuch, who is responsible for guarding

567 part of the emperor's harem. The dapobi belonging to the canton chiefs, belonging to the kombemba, are of the same origin. While the Mogho Naba could not sell the dapobi of Kibissi origin, the emperor and the canton chiefs could do as they liked with the true dapobi. They were sold for the most trifling faults and their wives and children were either sent away with them or turned over to other deserving captives.

Slaves of the Crown. (a) The bangaré. These are Peulh captives who have gradually cast off the authority of their masters and who have submitted voluntarily to the authority of the Mogho Naba.

A herd of cattle is called nab'bangaré, and it seems likely that the word bangaré, "herd," to designate this type of slave came from that source. However, the bangaré are not solely former Peulh slaves since a free individual who has committed a serious crime in his [90] native village and fears reprisal comes to join the "herd."

Once presented to the Mogho Naba, they were henceforth considered slaves and, as such, immune from prosecution.

567 62 The principal bangaré villages, generally known as "independent villages," are: Kaïbo (province of Gounga); Manghin, Zaanga (canton of Zorgongo); Zaon'pighin, Payaobtinga (canton of Boudry); Nabasnoghin (canton of Nedogo); Bangar'Nabilin (canton of Zorgo); Gandaogo (canton of Zoungou); Boumintoré, Sidtenga, Mandié, Bougoumbarga, etc.

567 681 The emperor could supply himself from these "herds" whenever the need arose. Any bangaré who had committed serious crimes or who had been denounced as dangerous individuals who spread disorder in the villages or committed robbery were castrated and made into eunuchs or sold by order of the emperor.

582 The bangaré intermarry since no free Mossi father would give them a daughter in marriage. This is solely due to the fact that if the emperor decided to sell a bangaré, his family would share the same fate. The father of the wife would not intervene in such a case, because this might be dangerous for him. So it is easily understandable that, under these circumstances, no father would seek such a match.

567 622 Bangaré chiefs. The chiefs of bangaré villages [91] are appointed by the Mogho Naba. The villages themselves are free of any

567 control by the canton chiefs in whose territories they are located.
622 The inhabitants pay nothing to the kombéré nor can the chief require any labor service in his fields or for the upkeep of his houses. They recognize only the Mogho Naba as chief.

567 Kamboinsé. True Kamboinsé are not Mossi; they came from the west during the reign of Naba Waraga (nineteenth successor of Oubri). Like the dapobi of the Dapoya section they came with guns (their chief even had a [ceremonial] stool) to put themselves under the authority of the Mogho Naba. Their chief, Gambaré by name, told the emperor that they had come to offer themselves as soldiers and slaves to help him pacify his territory. The Kamboinsé occupy a section of the town behind the Catholic mission on the right side of the road to Pô.

When the emperor's native gunners found themselves faced with competition from foreigners, they countered by appointing their own chief who took the title of Kamboin Naba. They are, however, different from the true Kamboinsé, and they live a dozen or so kilometers from Ouagadougou in the villages of Kamboinsé and Wobrigré.

While the first-mentioned Kamboinsé are voluntary slaves, the others are true slaves captured in war or bought by the emperor.

567 426 [92] Use of slaves as security for debt. Captives might be used to settle debts. It should be noted that the right to own slaves was not limited to the emperor and his vassals. Any prosperous Moaga (dakangré) might own them.

[612] If the head of a household died leaving debts, the heirs could sell a few slaves to pay off the obligation. If, however, the creditor preferred to have the slaves, the latter were put up for appraisal just as though they were livestock.

In the same way, slaves could be traded for horses, garments, or even loads of kola nuts.

567 If slaves were maltreated by their owners, providing that the latter were not of the nobility, they could put themselves under the protection of the naba. In that event they ceased to belong to their former owners. On the other hand, if a Moaga took it upon himself [682] to kill a slave, he at once had to pay a fine of 100,000 cowries to his canton chief as a blood price.

567 439 Ordinarily, captives who were brought back from the wars were at once sold to the Haoussa [Hausa] or Yarcé [Yarse] who traded

567 them for kola nuts with the Achanti [Ashanti] or for loaves of salt
439 at Timbuktu. Although they were always transported by roundabout routes to prevent them from finding their way back to their homes, still some of them always managed to escape.

492 The naba used the young yemdado as soroné or grooms, and
567 they would often [93] take the young and attractive women (yempoksé) as wives.

641 The sale of free men. Neither the emperor of the Mossi nor
681 his vassals sold their subjects. Individuals who were regarded as dangerous were simply put to death unless they took refuge in a bangaré to avoid being executed, as has been noted above. Some were sent to the emperor to be made into eunuchs.

304 The facial tattoos worn by the Mossi clearly distinguished them
567 from neighboring peoples. However, if by accident or because of
689 need a naba sold a free man and the latter was claimed by his relatives, the chief was required to buy back the slave or to indemnify his family. We have described above how a canton chief was exiled by the emperor for having sold free Mossi.

583 Concealed selling of women and children. In the chapter on
562 marriage customs among the Mossi we shall show that a native Moaga did not demand a bride price because he did not want to feel that
567 he was selling his daughter. There is no doubt that this rule has exceptions. Indeed, we shall show that the failure to pay a debt, a bout of drunkenness, or a favor received might suffice to mortgage the future of a daughter, even though at the time she might be a small child and quite unaware of her fate. In any event, there would be no question of her expressing any opinion, since her wishes are never taken into account. During periods of famine -- which have been
[131] occurring almost [94] regularly for some years -- a small basket of millet is enough to make a father promise his daughter. In the same way, we regret to say, a great many girls are promised in exchange for trifling sums at the time the poll tax is paid.

567 Rights of slaves. Since he is regarded as an inferior being, the yemdaogo (slave) has no well-defined rights. He is required to perform all kinds of domestic work and must give unquestioning obedience to his master and the master's family. Besides his essential duties, however, he is permitted to do some farming for himself, practice some trade, or to raise cattle, with the proceeds constituting

567 his personal fortune. The management of any such property is left entirely to him. If the master becomes indebted [to the slave], he is required to pay the debt within a fixed time limit.

Emancipation from slavery. As was indicated in the foregoing paragraph, it was possible for a slave to amass property through his own efforts. He might then free himself by paying his master 100,000 cowries. He then might either return to his native village or settle in his master's village. There have been slaves who not only freed themselves in this way, but also became slave owners in their turn.

If, however, slaves marry female slaves given to them by their masters and become fathers of families, they do not usually leave their masters. [95] They acquire a certain standing and are counted as members of the family. It is understood that they do not have the right to dispose of their children since the latter are dogyiri (house slaves).

465 Various types of unpaid work. Aside from the labor and other obligations required of all Mossi subjects for their haba -- we have described the forced labor in a previous chapter -- it may be said that, in general, no work is required without pay, even from slaves. In an area that is predominantly agricultural there can be no question of payment in money as would be the case in private or official enterprises where contracts specify the obligations of an employer to his employees. On the purely native level, the employer is obligated only to feed the workers.

In sum, what are the duties of a Moaga?

1. Cultivation of the family fields.
2. Construction and repair of huts and roofs.
3. Private work: basketry, shoemaking, weaving cotton strips, pottery, sewing, etc.

592 The head of the household is required to feed the workers who 476 cultivate the family plots or repair the huts. In a later chapter we shall see that when the [96] members of a family could not complete a task without help, they called on other young men in the village. In that case, animals were slaughtered, dolo (millet beer) was brewed, and sagbo (millet mush) or benga (beans) was prepared.

567 On the other hand, it should be stated that when yemdago were used for hard labor, they were very well fed and were even given double rations.

567 Were slaves part of an estate? Among the Mossi, the wi
428 are part of an estate on the same footing as the rest of the prop
562 of the deceased. The same thing applies to the captives (yem
and dogyiri (house slaves) who constitute and integral part of t
estate. They constitute a patrimony to be handed down from
father to son in accordance with the customary order of succes
They remain the exclusive property of the legitimate heir and
not distributed as are the wives of the deceased.

[97] Chapter 6

Djiba Naba, Crown Prince of the Mossi Empire

Preliminary Remarks

644 In writing on this subject we have not tried to ascertain
the canton of Djiba was once independent or whether it was un
the direct authority of the Mogho Naba.

At the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Djiba Nab
brother of the present emperor, Naba Kom, was drafted into t
army, and another brother had to be appointed to take his pla
The latter's administration was in many ways unsatisfactory, s
when the Djiba Naba, on his return from the front, had to be
to Doulougou to replace a deceased son of Naba Wobgo, the
Naba retained direct authority over the canton of Djiba. Mea
his eldest son had returned from Tunis and had been officially
the chief of Djiba, but he had had to leave again for military
at Salonika. Thus, it can be said that even before the canton
Djiba had been made the prerogative of the eldest son of Nab
Zombré, it had already been under the latter's authority.

It was during the reign of Naba Zombré, twenty-third M
Naba, that the eldest son of the emperor was given jurisdictio
the canton of Djiba. Naba Zombré, after Naba Niandeffo, h
of the longest reigns in the history of the country. He actuall
for sixty years.

643 [98] An old tradition requires an emperor who has ruled
782 thirty years to go to Oubritenga to celebrate zom'bika (literal

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [70] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

721 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the ●567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account. [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

567 /14/ The Mossi obtained slaves by purchase, warfare, or birth. No distinction was made among these various kinds of slaves; they were all treated in the same manner. The Bousansé and Gourounsi furnished the greatest number of slaves, and, as elsewhere, the Moslem Yarsé and Haoussa were the main traffickers. The Mossi sold each other into slavery too, as when a powerful man seized and sold a child or even an adult whom he had found defenseless in the bush. Sometimes a child was separated from its slave mother, but this was unusual. Slaves were part of the family property and devolved to the heir when their master died. When given in marriage by their own master, they acquired a certain freedom: they had their own house and their fields which they cultivated for their own use; they could acquire property and buy beasts of burden, goats, sheep, and cattle. The only vestige of slavery was the obligation to give all their daughters in marriage to their master. This is why whole villages of slaves are to be found, in no way distinguished from other villages. The village of Koupéla, estimated at 2, 500 inhabitants, is entirely composed of the naba's slaves with the exception of three families. The prime minister himself, the Saman'Naba, and all the ministers are slaves of the naba. It is true that this designation "slave" includes slaves through indebtedness. Whenever a native had borrowed from the naba an amount of some importance, such as the price of a cow, and was unable to pay it back, an arrangement was made between the debtor and the naba. The former promised all his daughters to the latter and thus pledged all his descendants. It was then said that he had become a slave to the naba.

566 Serfs were another source of hands to work the land. There were two kinds of serfs, or man-servants if one prefers: the dakwaba and the noakansé. A dakonré (singular of dakwaba; etymologically, "one who is not married") has a family who places him in the service of a rich man with the sole purpose of getting him married, of getting him a wife when he comes of age. He labors for his master, works his fields, runs errands for him; he may, with his master's permission, have a field of his own and a few small possessions; yet, though he is free, he may not leave his master to enter someone else's service. A noakanga (singular of noakansé) has no family. He places himself into someone's service of his own free will in order to be fed, housed, sometimes clothed; his master gives him a wife more or less promptly according to region. A noakanga is freer than a dakonré, for he

177 The preceding pages deal wholly with past history. The French occupation has profoundly modified the whole administrative set-up and curtailed the rights of nabas, who are now mere civil servants. The people are slowly learning not to fear them; their authority is weakening; the gifts dwindle; and the nabas have been put on short allowance and forced to cultivate their fields like everybody else. Their judicial power is practically gone, and those few who have preserved real authority were able to do so because of their remoteness from administrative centers and their past. They were in charge before the French occupation, and they have managed to keep up their prestige in spite of everything. Yet little by little attitudes 000 change and respect vanishes. Is this good? Is it bad? The matter could be argued at great length. Although this administrative system led to regrettable abuses which had to be checked, it also had its favorable aspects, and it made the Mossi into one of the most feared and most homogeneous peoples in the bend of the Niger.

/28/ BOOK II. FAMILY LIFE

Chapter 1. Establishment of the Family Through Marriage

562 The family is established through marriage. We shall, therefore,
584 first study the marriage bond. Obviously, since Christianity was
567 introduced in the country only a short time ago, virginity is unknown there even as a concept. Every nubile girl must marry. She is given in marriage by the person to whom she belongs, and her own tastes are not taken into account. She belongs primarily to her father, but sometimes even before her birth she belongs to the person who gave her mother away on the condition — a common clause in free marriage contracts — that the first girl she bears will be given in marriage by her grandfather. Or the woman may belong to her father's master, and this may be her father's only remaining obligation toward the man who formerly owned him as a slave. Thus, nearly all girls born in Koupéla belong by right to the naba, for the inhabitants of this locality were formerly his slaves. Sometimes a

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
587 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
584 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
848 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
[554] according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

[754]

1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

651 There is proof that trade tends to grow year by year in the ease with
436 which the natives now secure the five-franc piece needed to pay their
457 tax. The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle /an administrative district/ guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10, 000 or even 15, 000 cowries to obtain /62/ this famous coin, this charm, which was to free them from all difficulties with the Whites. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5, 000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate is from 3, 500 to 4, 000 cowries; French currency has depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere, through trading, this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting until the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries, they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from afar. The coins flow in; the rate of exchange goes down.

439 Nowadays, trading is less active toward the north. Formerly the
567 Mossi supplied Timbuktu, the desert regions, and even Morocco with slaves. The Gourounsi and Bousansé were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves. The Mossi even sold each other into slavery, and prior to the French occupation a woman and even more a young girl or boy did not dare venture alone a few hundred meters from the village; they were too afraid that they might not return. It is said that the Mossi even supplied the Constantinople court with eunuchs; and when the great Cardinal Lavigerie was head of the Algerian Arab Orphanage, officers once brought him small children rescued in the desert. They were very young Mossi who had been sold in Saraféré or Timbuktu and whom our officers had found enclosed in bags carried by camels in a caravan halted by our troops. These children were raised in Malta, and they returned to Mossi country where they rendered significant services. Now the establishment of an administrative center in Kaya, near the important market of Salmatenga, will no doubt promote trade in this northern region.

439 Nowadays the trade between Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo on the one hand, and Ouahigouya (in Mossi country), Saraféré, and Timbuktu or Dori (called Gyémaré by the natives) on the other hand, amounts to very little. The Mossi export kola nuts which they have brought

231 563 Mossi are very mediocre breeders by describing their manner of caring for their animals. Instead of tending them or having this done by their young men, they nearly always hand them over to the Foulbé for herding. This is also done whenever possible by the Bobo, Nounouma, and Sissala in the Leo residency, but it is not done by the Kassonboura, Nankana, or Dagari. If the head of a Mossi 231 soukala is wealthy, he employs his own private Peuhl herder. If he 563 is of average means or poor, he makes an arrangement with other 464 Mossi in the same circumstances, and they all get together to pay a single herder for their cattle. It is the poorer Foulbé, for their part, who agree to herd Mossi cattle in this fashion.

The agreement that binds both parties grants the milk and butter to the Peuhl, but the increase of the herd devolves to the owner. This agreement is made without any definite time limits, and it is only broken if the herder fails to tend the animals properly. If he does his job well, on the other hand, he herds them indefinitely, and when he dies his son succeeds him. By the same token, when the Mossi owner dies, his son leaves the animals in the hands of the same Peuhl.

The Foulbé in charge of tending the herds live in low, conical straw huts at the back of the Mossi villages that own the herds. Not far from their huts, they build an enclosure where they leave the cattle during the night. They take the animals to graze in the bush in the morning, and bring them back in the evening. Whenever one of the Mossi owners wants milk or butter, he buys it from the Peuhl. Sometimes the latter offers him milk as a gift.

● [567] We shall see later, when we discuss the Foulbé, that in former times the Mossi often enslaved the small Foulbé bands that /488/ came with the intention of settling in Mossi territory. The Mossi chiefs would confiscate the herds, and then, since they were unwilling to care for them themselves, they would return them to the dispossessed Foulbé in usufruct and in accordance with the agreement we have just described. It must nevertheless be said that all 563 Foulbé in Mossi territory were not subjected to this high-handed procedure. When we occupied Mossi territory, there were some free and wealthy Foulbé, some Foulbé villages with chiefs of their own. Actually, those Foulbé were by far the more numerous.

322 563 Foulbé as makers of wooden gourds and other items of a similar nature. The Mossi call them séta. Since there are many Foulbé in Mossi territory, there are Laobé also. Some of them have left their masters to settle independently, and they are now free.

May we present one, by the name of Louri. During the winter season he works the soil, although very slightly like all other Laobé and Foulbé, and he also makes wooden gourds. During the dry season, he only makes gourds. Owing to his very mediocre cultivating abilities, his trade nets him more than his fields.

His tools are as follows:

322 413 1. First, a large ax called diendé, which he uses to cut heavy timber.

2. The saotaré, a kind of well-sharpened hoe with a very short handle, which is used to fashion the gourd on the outside.

3. The tépotondé, a kind of hoe with a very short handle and a very sharp blade, which is used to hollow out the gourd.

4. The menkéré, which is also used to hollow out the inside of the gourd.

5. The kéfirga, a long-handled tool with a curved, sharp blade, which is used for the same purpose as the two preceding tools.

It is the blacksmith who makes the iron parts of these tools.

322 563 435 Their value is as follows:

The axe is worth	2,000 cowries
The saotaré is worth	500 "
The tépotondé is worth	500 "
The menkéré is worth	1,500 "
The kéfirga is worth	200 "

322 563 In order to make his gourds, our Laobé uses the wood of the following trees: hèdè, bouagaï, saboutoungaï, and bembé.

This Laobé comes from Badongo (a village located 31 kilometers from /523/ Ouagadougou). He has a wife and two children. [567] He is a former slave, a captive from Laobé, whose masters had settled at Badongo. The master left, and now he is free. Formerly he worked for his master, and now he works for himself. He makes gourds in advance and has them sold at market by his wife. He [435] sells the small ones for 100 cowries, the medium ones for 300, the large ones for 500 (0.10, 0.30, 0.50 franc).

M H 441 439 484 The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

M H 441 439 We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

M 567 439 In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

M 839 439 304 Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

592 People who are thus settled on their own work for themselves and no
596 longer for /546/ their father, with whom they lived and for whom they worked prior to marriage. They nevertheless offer gifts to their father from time to time.

592 2. As far as the marriage of children belonging to those house-
596 holds is concerned, a distinction must be made among the following
584 possibilities. When they are the children of wives bought by the family head, it is the latter who gives them in marriage. When they are the children of wives obtained by the husband himself, it is the latter who gives them in marriage.

Or else a rough compromise is made (in Boŭssouma province, for example). The first son and first daughter of the union are given in marriage by the family head, while the other children are given in marriage by the household.

596 3. It is the head of the family, however, who alone is entitled
782 to offer religious sacrifices for the whole family, and who always acts as its judge.

596 4. When the head of the family dies, the headship is trans-
428 mitted to his younger brother along with the family property. The private property of the deceased goes to all his sons, but the oldest son is favored. This actually constitutes the difference between this family type and the preceding one as far as inheritance is concerned. While in the preceding type the oldest son alone inherited, in this type all sons inherit but the eldest is heavily favored.

Thus, if the soukala was the private property of the deceased, it goes to the eldest son. If he is able to cultivate them all, the latter also keeps all the fields cultivated by the deceased. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus to his brothers.

As for livestock, if there are ten head that belonged privately to the deceased, and if there are three sons and two daughters, the oldest son will get four, each other son will get two, and each daughter will get one.

● [556] As for slaves, if the situation is the same, the oldest son will take five out of ten, the second son three, the third son two, and the daughters will get none.

Cowries and grain are apportioned in the same manner.

In addition to these shares given to the younger sons and to the daughters, it must be noted that private property has acquired greater

593 adultery except with a woman who is already married. A deceived
837 wife who wishes to take her revenge need only reveal to the spouse of her husband's partner the criminal relations that victimize them both."

593 Let us add that another of the husband's duties is to render help
602 to his wives' relatives if the latter are in needy circumstances.

Of course, the failure to fulfill these obligations could cause
593 the wife to request a divorce. Divorce thus exists among the Mossi,
586 although women rarely resort to it. The bride price is never claimed back by the husband, even if the woman has remained sterile. The children always devolve to the husband.

The husband, on the other hand, may turn out his wife, but Mossi husbands do not usually make use of this right.

585 Let us add that the matter of the girl's virginity at marriage
836 is settled by the Mossi as by most other Blacks. If a girl is bought or betrothed from a very young age, she must preserve herself intact for her future husband. An unbetrothed girl, however, is free to use her own body when she reaches puberty, and if she marries later she cannot be reprimanded for having become a woman prior to her wedding.

● 567 Let us now proceed to the status of slaves.

Two kinds of slaves are distinguished among the Mossi, aside from the usual distinction between trade slaves and house slaves.

1. The daparé (etymologically, "followers," "men who walk behind their master," from da, "man" and paré, "behind"). They are unmarried slaves.

2. The bagaré ("men of the enclosure"). Those are married captives.

/565/ The daparé live with their master and always remain at his disposal for any work that may come up. They have no small individual plots, therefore, and their master provides them with food and clothing at all times. When they reach marriageable age, their master buys them a wife (or at least it was so in the old days; she would cost the master about 60,000 or 70,000 cowries), and then they settle on their own.

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

428 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the
567 property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described
[171] up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké, Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

567 Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi,
178 the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowadays, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

567 When a master wants one of the sheep or beeves belonging to his
178 bagaré, the latter refuses to give it, or if he consents to sell the animal at market he gives his master but one-tenth of the cowries paid by the buyer. Nowadays, as a rule, the bagaré only "go
[425] along" when their master's debts are involved, and yet some of them run away with their belongings rather than pay those debts.

567 Let us also add that these slaves, who were mostly of Gourounsi
167 or Boussansé origin, now want to return to their own land, and there is a continuous exodus, slow but sure, of Mossi slaves toward the south. Since the French have strictly forbidden the purchase and sale of slaves, on the other hand, the sources of supply have dried out. All this makes it clear why among the Mossi, as incidentally throughout West Africa, we are progressing toward a slow but certain suppression of slavery and serfdom.

326 In closing, let us say that among the Mossi blacksmiths who
567 live in /special/ quarters or villages and whom we have already mentioned with regard to their patriarchal and nondecommunalized family type, we find true slaves of the common familial type such as we have described up to now, rather than serfs like the bagaré.

These slaves live in the same soukala as their master, whether married or unmarried, trade or house slaves. During the winter season, they all work on the fields of the soukala head from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with the usual luncheon break. They have small individual plots, which they may work after three o'clock. During /567/ the dry season, they work all day at the blacksmith's trade with their master.

They are provided with food throughout the year by the head of the soukala, but they procure their own clothing, jewelry, grigri, etc. The soukala head buys the first wife for them and disposes of their daughters in return.

567 The estate of a deceased slave goes to his master and to his sons.
429 As far as livestock and cowries are concerned, the master takes half
326 and gives half to the son or sons. As for clothing, bracelets, etc., everything goes to the children. The latter share equally the part of their father's estate that devolves to them.

567 We can see that just as the family type of Mossi blacksmiths
326 bears witness to an older state of affairs, the status of slaves among them also bears witness to the ancient local conditions prior to

567 326 Dagomba conquest. Both family type and slave status, indeed, refer back to the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc.

000 We come now to public powers. We refer the reader to Appendix 32 /not translated/ for a study of property regulations and neighborhood relations, and plunge forthwith into the study of public powers.

631 We already know that the Mossi political organization is centralized. The villages belong to cantons, which are in turn gathered into provinces under direct administration or into mere vassal provinces. At the summit of the hierarchy stands the king, the Moro Naba, the supreme chief of the Mossi, who lives at Ouagadougou. To give an idea of the former importance, or at least relative importance, of this empire, we shall state that in the Ouagadougou [162] circle alone there were eight provinces including among them 300 cantons, 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants.

643 Let us begin our description of this political organism with the head, that is, with the Moro Naba.

Moro Naba means "chief of the Mossi," from naba, "chief" and Moro or Mora which means Mossi in the singular. Moro yields Mossi or Mossé in the plural. (The French have grown accustomed to saying "one Mossi, several Mossi," but this is a barbarism and one should /568/ actually say, "one Moro, several Mossi," just as one says, "one Gourounga, several Gourounsi," "one Kipirga, several Kipirsi," etc.). As for the word for "chief," it is both naba and soba in Mossi. Naba seems to be the word brought by the conquering [192] Mossi-Dagomba group, while soba is probably the word that was used by the autochtonous population to designate chiefs.

645 Prior to the French conquest, the Moro Naba was surrounded by a certain number of ministers or eminent dignitaries who were given 1) specific duties /at court/, 2) in addition, part of the territory to govern. This is what accounted for provinces over and above the cantons, at least in those areas that were administered directly, but the heads of those provinces did not reside there. They lived at Ouagadougou, and were first and foremost ministers of the Moro Naba.

They were:

the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way perpetuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privileges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly, a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou. Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey. Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys the same privileges.)

We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer. There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

"Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory. Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French, the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta. This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls. Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

464 salary consists either of 100 cowries (10 centimes) or a basket of unthreshed millet. In addition to this, the employer feeds the employee. This is limited, I repeat, to times of famine.

/264/ True clientage, such as we described among the Malinké, does not occur among the Mossi.

356 2. Domestic servants. The domestic servant, such as exists in France and other civilized socieites, does not and never did exist among the Mossi. Actually, domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, and washing) are performed by the women in Yatenga society. For a corroboration of this, we refer the reader to what we said above about women's tasks.

●567 3. Slaves. Origins. The Mossi owned slaves prior to the French occupation. They still own some nowadays, although far fewer, only those, in fact, who did not run away. Since recruitment dried up at its source through the prohibition bearing on the purchase and sale of slaves, reinforced by severe penalties, the number of captives has dwindled day by day, and it is obvious that eventually they will disappear completely. At present, this has not yet come to pass.

[727] The Mossi used to obtain their slaves through raids on the Samo, Bobo, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habbé, and Rimaïbe /slaves of the Peul/. The Yarsé also brought some from the southern markets (Sikasso, Samory states, etc.) and sold them all over Yatenga. They kept many for their own benefit, and they possessed more slaves than the Mossi (as merchants, indeed, they always owned more slaves than the Mossi). The Peul of Yatenga also had many slaves, more than the Mossi, which they obtained through raid or purchase.

Voluntary slavery and debt slavery provided no captives, since these two kinds of slavery never existed in the region.

The Mossi of Yatenga themselves did not constitute a source of slaves for other Mossi of Yatenga. One Mossi of the region could not be the slave of another Mossi. Only members of the alien groups listed above could be enslaved (including the Mossi of Ouagadougou). The Peul were not enslaved, but only held for ransom, since they were both rich (in cattle) and lazy. Their Rimaïbe, however, as we have said, were taken as captives (a Peul would certainly not be willing to pay any ransom for them).

727 When two factions were at war in Yatenga, the Mossi who were made prisoners were killed immediately, including small children of the male sex, even those who were still at their mother's breast.

727 Only the sons of the two warring chiefs were spared. They were returned to their families for ransom. The women were also spared and returned to their husbands in exchange for other women or livestock. If their husbands did not come and claim them, the conquerors took them as wives and not as slaves.

567 435 Let us say a few words about the price of a slave. A man was worth 40, 000 cowries; a woman, 50, 000 or 60, 000; a young man, 50, 000; a young girl, 80, 000. We can see that the qualities most valued were, on the one hand, membership in the female sex and, on the other hand, youth.

567 4. Name. A slave is called yemba in Mossi (pl., yembésé) when no distinction is made between the sexes. When a male slave is meant, /265/ the word yembraogo is used (yembraodo or yembrâdo in the plural). For a female slave, one uses yempoka (yempokosé in the plural).

5. Kinds of slaves. The yembraogo, once bought or captured, was placed in irons, or to put it more precisely, irons were fastened to his feet in order to prevent him from escaping, but leaving him free to work. These irons were left on him for two or three years. When it was certain that he would not run away, the irons were removed. He spent all his time working for his master during the cultivating season, or he worked the small private fields belonging to his master's wives. In return, he was clothed and fed at all times. He could be resold, and this was done if there was dissatisfaction with him or his work.

If the master was satisfied with him, he bought him a wife. Then the slave became a bingo man, a "bingo," and was no longer a yembraogo. He passed from the status of a captive by trade or war to that of a house slave. Bingo is the name given to house slaves among the Mossi of Yatenga. At Ouagadougou they are called daparé or deporé (poré or paré meaning "back"); the daparé or daporé is the man who walks behind his master, the attendant, the slave. The bingo could not be resold except in unusual circumstances, such as when he committed fornication with his master's wife.

[592] When the master had but a few of them, the bingo lived in the same compound, with a door of their own leading outside. When there was a number of them, they had a small compound next to the one of the family.

During the season of cultivation, the bingo worked for his master two days out of three. During the dry season, he also worked for him

567 whenever the master had work to give him. He worked for himself the rest of the time, that is to say, one day out of three during the cultivation period and throughout the dry season when he was not "on duty."

He was fed by the master when he worked for him. When he worked for himself, he procured his own food.

The bingo provided his own clothing, except when he was absolutely incapable of doing so. Then he appealed to his master.

The bingo's daughters were given in marriage by the master, who took them for himself or gave them to his sons, to his brothers, etc. In return, the bingo's sons had to be provided with wives by their master and not by their father. In any case, they worked for him, like their father, and could no more be sold than he could, unless they betrayed the master with his wives.

567 428 The bingo could own property since he had time to work for himself. At his death, his inheritance went not to his master but to his oldest son (unless he had an enslaved brother nearby, but I am considering the case of a former yembraogo, bought by the master, given a wife by him, and thus becoming a bingo, and then having children). At the death of his eldest son /266/ the inheritance went to his younger brother, etc. The master came into the inheritance only when there were no heirs.

567 On the other hand, the master could request from his slave whatever he wished, a chicken, a goat, a beef. The slave could not refuse, since everything belonged to the master on principle, the slave being his also.

The bingo could never free himself or be freed by his master. The number of generations which had elapsed made no difference.

The bingo could belong to the head of a family, the head of a compound, the head of a work group, or to a mere household head. They were owned on an individual basis. When a man who owned a bingo or yembraogo owed labor to another man, for example, to the head of his work group, the bingo or yembraogo likewise owed labor to this man and went to work with his master.

567 644 It must be noted that the bingo of the Moro Naba, that is, the "Crown bingo," were in a special position from every point of view. As we shall see later under "Public Administration" /not translated/, they came under the authority of the Rassam Naba or Rassoum Naba, one of the four ministers, who was sometimes called Bingo Naba for

567 644 this reason. They did not work for the Moro Naba except seven or eight days a year when they were called along with all the other inhabitants of Ouahigouya, without exception, to the Moro Naba's fields. Actually, they were thus free men as far as work was concerned. Half their daughters, however, reverted to the Moro Naba, who took them for himself or for his close relatives. On the other hand, they supported themselves completely (food, clothing, etc.). The Moro Naba gave them no assistance whatever in this respect.

Let us add that the ordinary captives, the bingo of the common Mossi, found a safe retreat at the court of the Moro Naba. If a slave was dissatisfied with his master, he would run away and take asylum with the chief of Yatenga. The latter handed him to the Rassam Naba, who saw to it that a hut and a field were given to him (if he was married) and a wife as well (if he did not have any). As long as he was not married, he would cultivate the fields of the Moro Naba's wives, who provided him with food in return. Once married, he would work the soil, labor for himself and his wife, and have no obligations other than the general duties of the bingo who belonged to the Moro Naba, as we have seen above. In short, he would acquire the general status of a Crown slave.

Let us add, however, that if the master came and claimed his slave from the Moro Naba, the captive was sometimes returned. This depended on the fairness of the master's case (he had never mistreated his slave, had always been good to him, etc.) and also on the more or less sizable gift which he presented to the Moro Naba in order to gain his good graces.

The bingo of the Riziam Naba, an independent king as we have already noted /not translated/, were in the same position as the bingo of the Moro Naba and not in the position of ordinary bingo. The same applied to the bingo of the three great chiefs /267/ of the canton, the Zitenga Naba, Ratenga Naba, and Roussoum Naba.

566 6. Serfs. In Yatenga, there were serfs of a sort, the bagaré, to use the Mossi term. The only ones who had them, however, were the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Moro Naba of Riziam, and a few great canton chiefs, such as the Zitenga Naba and the Ratenga Naba. Not even the Moro Naba's ministers were entitled to own them, much less the common Mossi. The bagaré was a Peul slave, a dimadio (rimaïbé in the plural) who had been captured from the Peul or who had fled from them to the Mossi, in short, a former rimaïbé who had

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military service ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; besides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intangible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisticated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

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habited by Yarse, people of Mandingo origin who had been assimilated by the Mossi. There were no Fulani in Nobere, even though some lived in nearby districts. But in Pinse village there lived people called Simili-Mossi, who claimed descent from Fulani herdsmen and Mossi women. Basbedo village was inhabited and ruled by people of Busansi origin. They claimed that their ancestors had fled from famine and other hardships in Busansi country and had been granted haven by Naba Biligo. The people who lived in the two saghse of Nab'tenga called Dapore (Dapobi) and Baglere (Bangare) were serfs of diverse non-Mossi origin. Saghse or compounds of Gurunsi slaves were found close to the dwellings of nobles and village chiefs throughout the district.

The number of saghse in the villages of Nobere district varied according to the size of the village and the pattern of nam inheritance within the major lineage segment that ruled the village. The saka itself housed a minor-lineage segment. The larger the village's minor lineage segment and the greater this group's genealogical depth, the more numerous were its component segments and thus its saghse. The proliferation of saghse and minor-lineage segments within the ruling lineage of a village was dependent primarily on possession of the nam. As soon as a man received the nam, he obtained control over a large amount of goods and services. He was then in a position to obtain many wives for himself and his immediate relatives, and as a result his minimal lineage grew rapidly. In time this group became so large that it split from its brother babissi within the saka, and formed a new saka of its own. Finally, this babissi became a minor lineage in its own saka, in segmental opposition to the other babissi and minor lineages within the other saghse. If the descendants of one man retained the nam for about three generations, their lineage segment and saka grew larger and in time cast off its own junior segments. However, if the segment lost the nam to a man of another babissi and saka, it ceased to proliferate. Some such groups even declined and disappeared by fusing with other local segments of the same lineage. Here is how the system worked in Barkago village of Nobere district.

Barkago itself was founded sometime in the dim past by a son of Naba Biligo. It had an area of eight or ten square miles and a population of about 650 when the French arrived in 1896. Its boundaries were set by such natural phenomena as clumps of trees, hills, and ravines. The village itself included five distinct saghse separated by footpaths, hills, rocks, and ravines, and an area of wasteland (*weogho*). Three of the saghse, Natenga ("chief's land"), Godin, and Kedpalago, were inhabited by the minor segments of the boodoo of Naba Biligo. Here is how this came about. After

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

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to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and executed. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult administrative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

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692 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief
634 then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case.
695 Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and
[562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court.
[567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if
[576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness.
[578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

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The torture was seen as a punishment, and not as a form of ordeal to ascertain guilt or innocence. It was designed to cause the culprit as much suffering as possible before he died, and its harshness reflects the Mossi fear of witches and witchcraft. In one form of punishment called *koudgilga*, the culprit was sent to the smith, who tortured him by placing hot iron balls in both his hands. He was then beaten to death. Another type of punishment called *swengalenga* was more painful. A pottery jar from which the bottom had been removed was heated in a fire. Then it was placed over the head of the convicted witch and allowed to burn its way down onto his shoulders. The culprit was subsequently killed. Sometimes a convicted witch was not killed; instead, a man was sent to Ouagadougou to be castrated and sold as a eunuch, and a woman was sold outside the country as a slave.

Gross disrespect toward the chief and crimes of lese majesty were uncommon among the Mossi. These crimes were usually committed by persons who came into close contact with the chief—nobles and court retainers—rather than by commoners, serfs, or slaves. The most common form of lese majesty was adultery with one of the district chief's wives. The penalty for this was death for both violators. Anyone who dared insult the district chief at court was seized and executed. The same fate awaited those who talked about him maliciously in public or threatened to stir a rebellion against him. If the culprits were commoners, they were executed; if they were nobles, they were strangled in secret or were forced to commit suicide.

The district chief was caught in a dilemma whenever nobles committed major crimes or unlawful acts. They could not be imprisoned, and only the Mogho Naba had the legal prerogative to execute them. When a noble committed a major crime such as treason or rebellion, he was sent to the capital to be executed by slaves, who strangled him with a piece of cotton cloth. However, no district chief could allow the nobles to commit crimes with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they could only be punished at Ouagadougou. If a nobleman subverted the chief's rule by repeated acts of cruelty and brigandage, he was executed, although illegally. The executioners were the Baglere Naba and the Dapore Naba. These two men secretly visited the condemned noble, taking with them a bundle as a present from the chief. This bundle contained a new white robe in which were secreted a chief's bonnet and a poisoned arrow. As soon as the noble saw the gift, he knew that he was being ordered to kill himself. If he attempted to raise an alarm or run away, he was instantly strangled and his body was discarded in the bush. If he accepted the sentence, he was allowed to have food prepared, to eat, and then to kill himself. The chief ordered an elaborate funeral for his kinsman as though he had died an ordinary death. Thus, he was able to observe all the proprieties while at the same

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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
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> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *nongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide shields.

As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

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with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds. However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers.

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There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

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Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yamba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

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Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us:

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

634 574 Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters.

651 622 634 It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish [361] permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district [431] chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands.

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. [464] [566] Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped [476] the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his [431] roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual [692] rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodogo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[8]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Hausa settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(8) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> ... a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or